



Photo: Karen L. Anderson

## WHAT IS BIODIVERSITY?

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth. It includes all living things and the ways they interact with each other and their environment. Simply put, biodiversity is life.

There are three levels of biodiversity:

**genetic diversity** —the variety of genetic information contained in individual plants, animals and micro-organisms

**species diversity** —the variety of species

**ecosystem diversity** —the variety of habitats, ecological communities and ecological processes

## WHY IS BIODIVERSITY IMPORTANT?

Biodiversity is about being connected. All species, including humans, depend on each other to survive. We depend, directly and indirectly, on biodiversity for clean air and water, food and fibre, and amazing outdoor experiences like hiking, fishing and canoeing.

Conserving Ontario's biodiversity is important because healthy ecosystems sustain healthy people and a healthy economy.



## ONTARIO'S BIODIVERSITY IS UNDER THREAT

Ontarians are fortunate to live in a province that is home to an abundant variety of plants, animals, birds, fish and insects, as well as the forests, wetlands, lakes and rivers they inhabit. Ontario has been a leader in conserving its biodiversity, but our natural assets remain under threat.

Threats to Ontario's biodiversity include:

- Habitat loss
- Invasive Species
- Population Growth
- Pollution
- Unsustainable Use
- Climate Change

## THE ONTARIO BIODIVERSITY COUNCIL

The Ontario Biodiversity Council was formed in 2005 to guide the implementation of Ontario's first biodiversity Strategy. The Ontario Biodiversity Council is a group of 22 volunteers from environmental and conservation groups, government, academia, Aboriginal organizations and industry.

The Ontario Biodiversity Science Forum, the Biodiversity Education and Awareness Network and the Stewardship Network of Ontario all work alongside the Council to implement Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy.



photo: Simon Dodsworth

## ONTARIO'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY TARGETS

- 1.** By 2015, biodiversity is integrated into the elementary, secondary and postsecondary school curricula, including schools of business.
- 2.** By 2015, 50 per cent of Ontarians understand biodiversity and its role in maintaining their health and well-being.
- 3.** By 2015, the number of Ontarians who participate in biodiversity conservation activities is increased by 25 per cent.
- 4.** By 2015, all sectors have initiated the development of implementation plans in support of Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, and by 2020, those plans are implemented.
- 5.** By 2020, all relevant policies and programs integrate biodiversity values.
- 6.** By 2015, plans for climate-change mitigation are developed and implemented and contribute to Ontario's target to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions by 6 per cent below 1990 levels.
- 7.** By 2015, strategic plans are in place to reduce the threats posed to biodiversity by invasive species.
- 8.** By 2015, the release of pollutants harmful to biodiversity is reduced.
- 9.** By 2020, the growth of Ontario's per-capita resource consumption and waste generation is halted and reversed.
- 10.** By 2015, the status of species and ecosystems of conservation concern in Ontario is improved.
- 11.** By 2015, the proportion of private lands in Ontario that are managed for biodiversity is increased.
- 12.** By 2015, natural heritage-systems plans and biodiversity-conservation strategies are developed and implemented at the municipal and landscape levels.
- 13.** By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and aquatic systems are conserved through well-connected networks of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures.
- 14.** By 2020, programs and policies are in place to maintain and enhance ecosystem services.
- 15.** By 2015, a long-term monitoring and reporting system for assessing the state of Ontario's biodiversity is established and operating.



CA20N  
OBS  
~2011 057



*Renewing  
Our Commitment*

# Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy

## SUMMARY

### Ontario Biodiversity Council

*Our vision is a future where biodiversity loss is halted and recovery is advanced. People value, protect and enhance biodiversity and the ecosystem services essential for human health and well-being.*



Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, 2011 is the guiding framework for conservation of Ontario's rich biodiversity over the next decade

## GOALS

- Mainstream Biodiversity.
- Protect and restore Ontario's biodiversity.
- Use Ontario's biological assets sustainably.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Critical components of change required



## OBJECTIVES → OUTCOMES → KEY ACTIONS

Clear focus for our efforts

What we want to achieve

Things we can do to achieve outcomes

## TARGETS

How we will measure progress

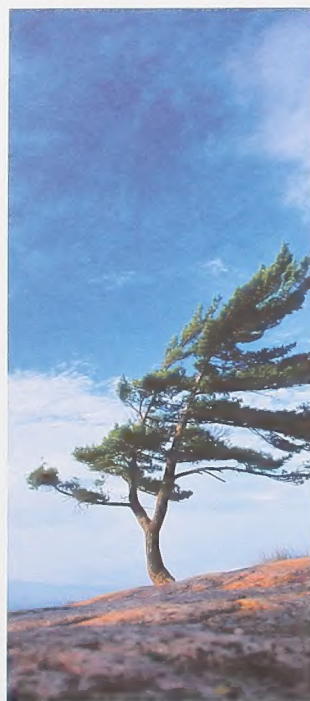


Photo: Ontario Tourism

## STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR ACTION

Four strategic directions are required to conserve Ontario's biodiversity: **Engage People, Reduce Threats, Enhance Resilience, Improve Knowledge**

Each strategic direction is supported by long-term objectives, outcomes and key actions. The success of this Strategy will be tracked through 15 specific targets. Progress will be monitored and assessed over a 10-year timeframe.



ENGAGE PEOPLE

**Our decisions and actions are crucial to the conservation of biodiversity in Ontario.**

**Objective:** Inspire and empower people to value and protect biodiversity

**Outcomes:**

- All people learn about biodiversity and understand its importance to human health and well-being
- The capacity to contribute to biodiversity conservation through stewardship is enhanced.

- People are investing and participating in biodiversity conservation and stewardship.

**Objective:** Mainstream biodiversity across all sectors

**Outcomes:**

- Ontario has a strong foundation of policy and legislation, and responsibility for the conservation of biodiversity is accepted by all.



REDUCE THREATS

**Reducing threats is a key part of conserving Ontario's biodiversity for future generations.**

**Objective:** Reduce pressures on biodiversity

**Outcomes:**

- The loss and degradation of natural habitats are decreased.
- The growth of Ontario's Ecological Footprint is halted and reversed.

- Plans for climate-change mitigation are developed and implemented.

**Objective:** Promote sustainable use of biological assets

**Outcomes:**

- The use of Ontario's biological assets is sustainable.



ENHANCE RESILIENCE

**Enhancing Resilience of Ontario's ecosystems will increase their capacity to cope with change.**

**Objective:** Maintain, restore and recover ecosystem function

**Outcomes:**

- The connectivity of fragmented landscapes is increased, and currently intact landscapes are maintained.
- Plans to cope with climate change are developed and implemented.
- Maintain, restore and enhance ecosystem services.

**Objective:** Protect Ontario's genetic, species and ecosystem diversity

**Outcomes:**

- The protected-areas system is representative of Ontario's ecosystems.

- Fewer species and ecosystems are of conservation concern.

**Objective:** Invest resources and funds strategically

**Outcomes:**

- Critical priorities to conserve biodiversity are identified and acted upon.
- Cities and towns invest in the management and restoration of urban habitats.
- There is sustainable long-term investment for biodiversity conservation in Ontario.



IMPROVE KNOWLEDGE

**Even with decades of scientific research, there is still so much we need to learn and understand.**

**Objective:** Improve and share biodiversity knowledge

**Outcomes:**

- Knowledge for conserving biodiversity is accessible and used to make good decisions.

**Objective:** Implement biodiversity monitoring, reporting and evaluation

**Outcomes:**

- The ability to assess and report on the state of Ontario's biodiversity is improved.

## GET STARTED TODAY!

Biodiversity sustains us and enriches our lives – and we need to conserve it.

## ONTARIO'S BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY KEY ACTIONS

**Engage People** – actions under this strategic direction address:

- Biodiversity education, awareness and partnerships
- Establishing a Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights
- Decision-making tools for biodiversity conservation
- Developing implementation plans by all sectors
- Improving the legislative framework, incentive programs and economic valuation of biodiversity
- Stewardship initiatives and recognition of conservation efforts

**Enhance Resilience** – actions under this strategic direction address:

- Natural cover targets and expanding Ontario's protected areas system
- Conservation-based land use planning at all scales
- Biodiversity planning for Ontario's cities and towns
- Climate change adaptation planning
- Genetic resource management and recovery of species and ecosystems of conservation concern
- Sustainable management of harvested species
- Establishing sustainable funding mechanisms

**Reduce Threats** – actions under this strategic direction address:

- Urban planning that minimizes impacts on biodiversity
- Improving efficiencies of energy and water use
- Mitigating the effects of climate change by storing carbon in natural systems
- Enhancing prevention, control and management efforts for invasive species
- Enhancing efforts to reduce pollution

**Improve Knowledge** – actions under this strategic direction address:

- Biodiversity research and monitoring
- Reporting on the state of Ontario's biodiversity and on progress in implementing this strategy



For additional information on Ontario's Biodiversity Strategy, 2011 and actions that support biodiversity conservation in Ontario visit

[ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca](http://ontariobiodiversitycouncil.ca)